



Making a Difference Good News from the ALMO sector

1 Introduction

ALMOs (arms length management organisations) are good news. Only three years old at most, they already have an enviable track record of real achievements to their name. They are substantial investors of public money, improving both the fabric and facilities of council homes. In the process, they are making a dramatic impact on the quality of life of people living in many of the country's poorest neighbourhoods. They often lead the field in innovative practice. For they were set up not just to deliver physical improvements, but to work with residents to improve services. And being ambitious and successful organisations, they are already starting to transform many of their neighbourhoods into thriving and desirable places to live. The testament of residents who have been part of the change process is a compelling witness to their success.

"It uplifts the spirits of people to have a good home. Good housing produces good health, and for children and improves their learning too".

ALMOs represent a real opportunity for the continued long term future of council housing. They differ from other sectors in that the structure, organisation and management of the company is at arms length but both the stock and the company are owned by the council thus ensuring that the residents remain council tenants and the ALMO remains committed to meeting local needs.

Key features of ALMOs

- ALMOs remain committed to council owned social housing and to a local community focus in the services they provide
- The separation from the council allows staff to focus more on service delivery and tenants have a real say in decisions
- ALMOs are full partners in helping councils to deliver their housing strategy, regeneration, social inclusion and community safety agendas.
- ALMOs will achieve the decent homes target by 2010 or earlier, which in many cases would not otherwise have been possible
- ALMOs are already delivering efficiency savings.

2 The emerging themes for positive practice

Over the last year the housing inspectorate at the Audit Commission has published its Key Lines of Enquiry and these continue to be refined over time. They describe, subject by subject, the characteristics found in organisations regarded as providing excellent 3* services. Much of the best practice described mirrors that found in the best performing ALMOs. They often lead the way in showing what can be achieved. This drives up standards as

yesterday's innovation becomes today's normal practice and positive practice is shared between landlords. Some of these highlights are set out below.

Despite their youth ALMOs have established an enviable track record in:

- Achieving decent homes
- Improving services
- Empowering tenants.

The link between performance improvement and additional funding has motivated ALMOs to achieve extraordinarily good inspection result ratings when compared to others in the social housing sector. At end May 2005 there were 8x3*, 25x2* and 3x1* ALMOs in the first three rounds of the programme.

Would some of this have happened anyway had the stock remained in the council's management? Recent research published by the ODPM¹ about factors which drive improvements in housing services implies this is not so. Ingredients for success include:

- Ambitious leadership
- A focus on customers
- Skilled governance which gives residents real power in driving change
- A single-minded approach to the delivery of the housing service
- The carrot of funding dangled in front of the stick of inspection scores.

Excellence in social housing does not just happen. It has to be worked at.

ALMOs aspire to establish a vibrant and innovative sector that will:

- Provide decent homes
- Raise standards across the public rented housing sector
- Achieve excellence in service provision
- Promote tenant empowerment
- Help to deliver broader national and local policy priorities.

However, if they are to contribute more effectively to regeneration, neighbourhood renewal and the sustainable communities' agenda a financial, legal and policy framework needs to be put in place that will secure a long term future for council housing managed by ALMOs. Given the tools ALMOs have the capacity to deliver much more to their local communities.

¹ *Best Value in Housing: What makes LAs sustain and improve their housing?*

3 What is an ALMO?

An ALMO is an arms length management company set up by a local authority which is its sole shareholder. Like any private company it has a Memorandum and Articles of Association which set out its aims and how it may run its affairs but it is non profit making. It has a board of directors and a company secretary whose activities are guided by Companies House legislation. ALMOs have a mixed board of directors, usually with one third being nominated by the sponsoring council, one third elected or selected residents and one third independent members. There are variations, but typically ALMO boards have 15 directors. Five will probably be serving councillors; five are tenants or leaseholders and five are people who live or work locally, are interested in housing and whose business or professional experience means they have particular skills useful to the successful running of the company.

Empowering residents to have a real say in the quality of service delivery is one of the aims of ALMOs. ALMOs must achieve at least two stars out of the three maximum possible for service quality when they are inspected by the Audit Commission. Without that they do not unlock additional funding. Inspection reports place explicit weight on the extent of customer focus. Inspectors look for hard evidence that residents are involved in setting and monitoring standards and that they have the chance to make an input into the longer term strategic priorities of the organisation.

ALMOs all have paid staff to carry out the work day to day, the majority of whom will have transferred from the council when the ALMO was set up. The ALMO will have a formal management agreement with the council which sets out who is to do what, and a delivery plan which specifies what has to be achieved by when. Councils retain the strategic housing function, including responsibility for homelessness and for private sector housing. The council continues to own the properties which the ALMO manages. This means that there are close and continuing ties between the two bodies. Getting this relationship right (*"Arms length but not out of sight"* said a tenant ALMO chair) is one of the biggest challenges for the sector.

4 The ALMO story so far

Under the government's Sustainable Communities Plan, councils must choose between stock transfer, the Private Finance Initiative and setting up an Arms Length company if they need additional funding in order to bring their housing stock up to the Decent Homes standard (DHS) by 2010. The first eight ALMOs were established in April 2002. There are now nearly 60 ALMOs established or in the process of being set up and a sixth bidding round is expected in 2005. By the end of 2006 ALMOs will be managing half of all council housing, close to 1m homes.

ALMOs directly affect the lives not just of their tenants and families, but leaseholders and people who live in surrounding properties as well. Many tenants are vulnerable through age or disability. Many are disadvantaged through poverty both of opportunity and of income. Planning and delivering the physical building programmes is therefore especially complicated. Contractors work in and around properties which are lived in. This requires real skill and sensitivity. But the programmes are on track and many residents are already enjoying vast improvements to their homes.

5 Why this report was produced

However, ALMOs do more than just manage and improve the stock. The NFA commissioned this report to highlight both this and some of the other innovations ALMOs are delivering in order to help make their communities better places to live. The report draws on conclusions from the inspection reports and material volunteered by the ALMOs themselves, including the detailed case studies described below. They represent a sample of ALMO initiatives. Thanks go to all for those who have contributed to the report and apologies for those initiatives that could not be included due to lack of space.

CUSTOMER FOCUS

a) **Accessibility:** ALMOs by definition have a stronger geographical focus than the larger housing associations which work in several geographical locations. This does not automatically mean that it is easy for people to contact them. Social housing organisations need to be easily accessible to everyone, including vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, who may find it hard to visit the office or to communicate by phone when they have a problem. Many ALMOs have been complimented for the quality of that all important front line contact. The best ALMOs have:

- Written service standards agreed with residents, understood by all staff, and monitored
- Professional, welcoming, efficient service at first point of contact
- Most problems solved at first call
- Good diagnostic information to be used over phone for repairs
- Clear documentation, in accessible and translatable formats, with tenants involved in drafting
- Disability Discrimination Act compliant offices, which are welcoming and child friendly
- Excellent diversity awareness including disability and sensory impairment
- Customer satisfaction with front line services regularly monitored and improvements made as a result, especially repairs
- Complaints (compliments/suggestions) easy to make, well administered, reported to board and learned from
- Good interactive and easy to navigate website with links to welfare/debt advice

- Some evening/weekend services
- A Freephone for repairs
- Services for younger residents who are in work and therefore need out of hours services, so text messaging for communication, interactive website for reporting repairs and late opening are available
- Customer service training compulsory not just for front line staff but for contactors too.

Homes for Islington's customer contact centre, HFI direct is open 8am till 8pm on weekdays and 8am till 12 noon on Saturday for repairs reporting, paying rent and service charges, arranging gas check access and enquiries about rehousing and choice based lettings.

CityWest Homes has launched an SMS Text Messaging Service and invited residents to text, email or send a postage paid reply card to CityWest Homes saying how they would like to be contacted. The aim is to keep residents better informed and to tailor communications to their needs. Currently, in the event of an emergency, eg, heating breakdown, housing officers spend time calling up residents at home. Often, the only numbers on record are landline telephone numbers. Calling up every resident takes time and not all of them will be close to their home landline when an emergency arises. The SMS service is in its pilot stage and gives residents an option to be notified by text message alerts in the event of an emergency. Text messages will be sent alerting residents and update messages as developments occur. Additionally text messages could be created by e-mail and sent over a mobile network making it a speedier and cost effective way for the estate office to communicate with residents.

b) User focus: Many ALMOs, especially but not exclusively those which work in areas of high racial and cultural mix, have gone well beyond their minimum statutory obligation not to discriminate. We see:

- Excellent knowledge of demographics of the local community
- Working with excluded groups to tailor services to meet their needs
- Customer services tailored especially to meet communication problems (language line, interpretation, Braille, hearing loop, large print etc)
- Disability and sensory impairment understood as being a cause of social exclusion as well as differing ethnicities
- Diversity awareness training not just for staff but for contractors.

Hillingdon Homes provides a Golden Years service for older tenants where decent homes works are to be carried out. They clarify what is needed from both Hillingdon Homes and the contractor to enable the tenant to have the work done rather than be left out of the scheme because of their special needs. Help and assurance is provided during the period leading up to the start and throughout the duration of the works. There is the opportunity for tenants to register their concerns and needs. Checks are made at the end of each day before leaving the site to make sure that everything has been left working and that the tenant is happy with arrangements. Any special needs in relation to medical conditions, vulnerability and so on are ascertained at an early stage, so that these are dealt with sympathetically, eg, by varying the working pattern to suit the needs of the tenant.

- c) **User engagement:** At the strategic level, we find ALMO tenants engaged in setting, monitoring and planning the future service (including tenants trained as inspectors, joining in on surveys, involved in evaluation of pilots, included in DHS programming, agreeing DHS "plus" standards, and the selection of contractors).

CityWest Homes held a series of workshops with stakeholders and staff to define the organisation's purpose, vision and priorities.

Hounslow Homes has been particularly recommended by inspectors for its clear focus on service users and involvement of residents in monitoring, challenging and evaluating and for its flexibility and creativity in engaging tenants through formal groups, area forums, estate based groups and mystery shopping.

Bolton at Home, Rochdale Boroughwide Housing and Six Towns Housing (Bury)	
Tenant Peer Group – project facilitated by Greater Manchester Housing Best Practice Unit covering eight Greater Manchester authorities/ALMOs.	
Background to initiative	The project was set up in August 2004 to investigate the possibility of sharing each other's customers to carry out reality checks/mystery shopping and for customers and officers to understand and compare how other organisations provide services and learn from this.
Main aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To carry out reality checks/mystery shopping using "unknown" customers to check service standards • To allow customers & officers to see other organisations' ways of working and standards • To learn from each other and share good practice • To drive up standards.
Main benefits	To allow comparisons to be made directly with other organisations on specific services which in turn allows officers to learn different ways of working to help drive up standards for customers. Officers share good practice rather than having to "reinvent the wheel".
Costs	First pilot check carried out in February 2005 on Estate Inspections. No full costing completed yet but known to be less than £1,000 in total.
Efficiency gains	Pilot project was excellent as a starting point bringing the customers together and learning how checks can be shared and undertaken. Project group will take this pilot forward and roll out to include other organisations and develop a programme of future checks to ensure continued progress.
Comments	Possibly the first such project in the country. The potential to take this forward and use as a critical tool in comparing, sharing, learning and making improvements is unlimited. Customers not only thoroughly enjoyed the pilot but also wanted the project rolled out quickly as they can also see the benefits. Excellent way to network with other organisations and staff that may not, by normal benchmarking methods, be involved in meeting others.

CORE SERVICES

a) **Repairs:** good repairs lie at the heart of any landlord service. The best performing ALMOs concentrate on getting the day to day repairs work right first time in a way which satisfies tenants' expectations. They aim for top quartile performance. Some of those already achieving this on their routine, urgent and emergency repairs are now aspiring to be in the top 10%. Here are some of the positive practice features:

- Easy to report repairs (including occasionally text messaging, and on line)
- 85% repairs completed on first visit
- Multi skilled operatives
- Appointments are offered and kept
- Appointments, weekend and evening working are available
- Gas servicing - the target for annual service checks is always 100% and 99% achievement with sensitive but firm procedures on the non access cases
- The proportion of planned to reactive spend at broadly 70:30 shows that preventative work takes a significant portion of the budget, helping to reduce the inefficiency inherent in constant patch repairs
- Emergency repairs not significant proportion of total
- Partnering with one or several main contractors is usually in place to achieve better service and efficiencies
- Investment partners work well together, local labour schemes
- There will be some special priority given to repairs for people who are frail or disadvantaged
- If need be the contractors will try to supply female operatives
- Contractors have had diversity/customer service training
- Tenants involved in planning programme for DHS/improvements, aware of programme and offered choice of colours/fittings
- Relet times are improving, and safety checks are always done
- Aids and adaptations for people with disabilities handled swiftly and well
- Disrepair claims dealt with effectively.

Gateshead Housing Company is working with B&Q to offer Do-it-Yourself training for tenants. It has also made gas servicing available for leaseholders at a rate cheaper than British Gas.

Hillingdon Homes has a "Golden Years Standard" for contractors working in the homes of older people and those with special needs.

First Choice Homes Oldham has trained tenant inspectors for pre and post inspections.

CityWest Homes	
Graphical Repairs Ordering System (GRO)	
Background to initiative	<p>Developed in consultation with residents with accessibility as a high priority - the system needed to be suitable for residents where English is not their first language and for residents who may have eyesight difficulties or visual impairments.</p> <p>The GRO was integrated with the launch of the CityWest website in Summer 2004. This allowed all residents to "try out" the system without actually requesting a repair.</p>
Main aims	To develop a web based repairs ordering service for residents, which is accessible, simple and intuitive, using point and click images for ease of use and incurring the minimum of translation.
Main benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to report both communal areas and repairs inside home • Ability to report a repair at a convenient time to the resident – ie, outside office opening times • Accessibility to groups where English is not a first language. <p>The GRO was used as a learning tool on IT courses run for families on Westminster City Council's estates as part of the WestminsterConnects project which taught parents and their children how to use the Internet, send email etc and also highlighted the usefulness of the GRO System. Residents said that the Graphical Ordering System was easy to use. (WestminsterConnects is a partnership programme with Westminster Adult Education Service, Education Action Zone and Tools for Schools.)</p>
Efficiency gains	Web traffic to the graphical repairs pages on the CityWest website is being monitored and the efficiency gains will become clearer in the next few years as more residents in social housing have access to a PC.
Comments	<p>The system is one of the first to be developed by an ALMO or local authority.</p> <p>There has been very positive feedback from residents of all ages and backgrounds at information days, the CityWest AGM and community events where the system has been available to residents. One young resident said <i>"This Website is very interesting because I can find out what is happening in my community...also resolve any problems I have in my home."</i></p>

Golden Gates Housing	
Income Collection - Income Management Section formed February 2004	
Main aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise income collection by reducing rent arrears and streamline processes • Achieve top quartile performance • Provide a housing service that meets the needs and ambitions of the wide ranging communities in Warrington • Continuously improve services through best value and new ideas driven by information technology.
Main benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A service provision that meets the needs of customers. • Complete range of payment methods that includes:- office; direct debit; standing order; internet; telephone; kiosks; allpay; salary deductions. • Overall 38% of all tenants paying electronically of which 23% pay by direct debit. • Integrated advice services to complement work of Arrears staff; Money Advice specialists; Housing Benefit Liaison Officers; 60+ Benefit Advisor specialists.
Efficiency gains	<p>Rent arrears reduced by over 0.25% in first year of operation.</p> <p>Increased Housing Benefit take up</p> <p>Electronic diary appointment systems minimising lost time.</p>
Comments	<p>Housing Inspectorate in 2004 found the section to be an <i>'area of strength'</i>.</p> <p>New ICT system planned for 2005 implementation will reduce costs - reduction in automated letters, use of texting, on line statements availability.</p>

b) Rent/Income collection: in addition to top quartile performance, many ALMOs are achieving:

- Firm management but good support/advice for vulnerable people in difficulties with payments
- Integrated approach (welfare benefits/social services support where appropriate)
- Wide range of payment options
- Good debt and welfare benefit advice and counselling

- Proactive work with local authorities where housing benefit payments are a problem
- Joint case work with tenancy support workers where there is a combination of anti-social behaviour or other tenancy problems as well as arrears leading to eviction.

There has been some imaginative effort put in to encourage rent payment - **Leeds South Homes'** Red Cards for example.

Offering appropriate services for the context are important. **South Lakes Housing** has a fortnightly door to door rent collection service for older and vulnerable people in its predominantly rural, dispersed communities, and this home visit combines repairs and rent/benefit assistance with estate inspection.

c) **Voids/relets turn round**

Top quartile performance is, of course, what good landlords aspire to. More important than the overall headline figures is the way they tackle more difficult voids and harder to let properties. They can do this through:

- Fast tracking of straight-forward voids
- Pre-termination visits wherever possible to the outgoing tenant
- Clear void repair and lettings standard agreed with residents
- Choice Based Lettings in place and working well for both residents and landlords, including for older people's housing
- Sound monitoring and analysis of properties which seem to be becoming hard to let
- Consideration of incentive schemes
- Energetic diagnosis/marketing of hard to lets
- Exit interviews with tenants used to inform subsequent choice of home
- Adapted properties registered and offered to those who need them
- Close liaison with the local authority over nominations
- Accompanied viewings
- "Welcome Packs" of goodies for tenants moving in
- Thorough sign ups and post tenancy support.

Berneslai Homes' property shop was opened in 2003. It let 363 properties under the Homechoice scheme in 2003/4, compared to nine the previous year, with 94% of customers using the shop being satisfied.

CityWest Homes uses its IT systems to note anomalies in payment patterns and contact, to avoid tenants who have died at home lying undiscovered. It has close liaison with the Coroner's Officer and the council's Funeral Officer for tenants who have no known next of kin or who have died intestate.

Golden Gates Housing offers the services of a handyman free for one hour to new tenants, and has a dedicated voids team, integrated with the caretaker service.

Sheffield Homes	
Choice Based Lettings and tackling low demand	
Background to initiative	The scheme was set up to respond to concerns raised by tenants, applicants, members and staff. The old system was confusing, unclear and did not give applicants much control. The CBL pilot scheme began in October 2001 in part of the city. The scheme was successful and was rolled-out city wide in March 04.
Main aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve demand and create long-term sustainability without impacting on vacant turnaround time • To promote and maximise choice for applicants and to give them more control in the rehousing process • To have an easy and transparent system and provide an enhanced service for homeless and vulnerable applicants.
Main benefits	<p>For Applicants: More choice and removal of restrictions; more control; transparent system allowing applicants to make informed and realistic choices.</p> <p>For Sheffield Homes: Increased demand for council properties, contributing considerable savings on rent loss; reduced turnaround time of vacant properties; better sustainability on estates contributing to more successful communities.</p>
Costs	Set up costs were high (approx £250,000) due to the development of the first real interactive website for choice based lettings. This would not be reflected for other users. Running costs are broadly the same as for running a waiting list system, although the balance of expenditure has shifted from 'backroom' to frontline services and support to applicants.
Efficiency gains	Considerable rent loss savings made due to higher demand and quicker turnaround times.
Comments	<p>An external inspection by the Audit Commission leading to a 3* rating as <i>"An excellent service with promising prospects for improvement"</i></p> <p>Customer satisfaction is also very high - over 90% with the system.</p>

d) Estate services

However good the quality of the home is behind the front door, any locality is judged by residents and visitors alike by the quality of its environment. Many of the estates managed by ALMOs are characterised by large amounts of communal space, which may be laid to grass, or tarmac, may be shared car-parking or allocated garages. Managing communal corridors, lifts and stairwells is always a challenge, particularly as one feature of anti-social behaviour is the damage to the physical environment it often causes. Effective solutions for graffiti prevention and removal, dealing with fly-tipping, moving dumped and dangerous vehicles and making sure that bin areas are as clean and safe as possible is all part of the ALMO routine. Well performing ALMOs have achieved:

- Cleanliness in common parts
- Good caretaking
- Estates which are clean, attractive and tidy (both grounds and common parts)
- Good partnership working to maintain quality of life on estates
- Regular publicised estate inspections attended by residents and acted on
- Visible security presence, eg, neighbourhood wardens
- Anti-social behaviour (ASB) proactively managed with emphasis on maintaining tenancies
- Close joint working with other agencies on complex cases and on evictions (including internal income collection team and external agencies, eg, social services, probation, youth offending, police)
- Perpetrators and victims kept informed of progress and consequences of differing courses of action
- Protocols agreed and acted on
- Domestic violence and racial harassment actively handled
- Positive alternatives to involvement in low level vandalism for young people, with support packages available when needed, and joint working with local schools on prevention.

Cheltenham Borough Homes has launched a Neighbourhood Warden Service. This service helps deliver CBH's commitment to safer communities and tackles anti social issues such as vandalism, fly-tipping, graffiti, litter and abandoned cars that have been identified through consultation with our residents. The Wardens promote events such as 'Community Clean-Up Days', 'Sports Events' and 'Litter Picking Competitions'. They have also introduced successful initiatives to tackle graffiti, involving working with the Youth Offending Team; and an initiative to improve the gardens of the frail and elderly, working in partnership with people with disabilities from a local care centre.

A tenancy support service has been developed by **Poole Housing Partnership** which also employs a range of tools to tackle anti-social behaviour including mediation services, acceptable behaviour agreements and contracts, anti-social behaviour orders and other legal remedies.

In **Your Homes Newcastle**, as part of a joint initiative with Northumbria Police, a multi agency Anti Social Behaviour Unit has been set up to collate information on ASB, target offenders and provide a coordinated response to problems. A Solicitor, Victim Support Worker and a Neighbourhood Services Senior Security Manager have been seconded into the unit. The aims are to:

- Provide an effective multi agency approach to Anti Social Behaviour
- Provide better support and information to victims and witnesses
- Provide a consistent response to incidents of Anti Social Behaviour
- Improve information sharing between partners
- To make Newcastle a better place to live, work and visit.

The unit uses a range of interventions including prevention, education and enforcement as appropriate. It feeds into the Newcastle Community Safety Partnership, to inform the debate on strategy and the wider Community Safety agenda.

In **Barnet Homes** two dedicated Community Development Officers work closely with Neighbourhood Housing Teams in involving the community in local projects. Activities have included working with a community architect to develop an environmental scheme for an estate to improve the physical environment, deal with security and community safety issues, tackle antisocial behaviour, reduce revenue costs and make the estate a desirable place to live.

Leeds West Homes employs three Environmental Teams that provide a responsive service to residents by clearing land, removing fly-tipping, tidying up eyesores, cutting back hedges, tidying gardens of void properties and small scale environmental projects.

After consultation with residents **Colchester Borough Homes** compiled a list of external improvements to be tackled on an estate in the decent homes programme, such as the condition of front gardens. The initiative encompassed both tenanted and owner occupied properties and there has been 94% compliance.

DECENT HOMES STANDARD/STOCK INVESTMENT

All ALMOs should, of course, be making excellent progress here. It is what they were set up to do. There are numerous examples of imaginative ways of setting about this complex business in a way that satisfies the resident, landlord and government alike. The Chief Executive of one midlands ALMO has "*65 kitchens and bathrooms a week*" as his mantra! Across the board we find ALMOs which have:

- A programme negotiated with residents, and a DHS "Plus" standard for extra work negotiated with residents
- Investment ahead of 2010 target
- Robust stock information, regularly updated
- Procurement carefully considered/partnering to achieve efficiencies
- Good communication of programme to residents
- Strategic choice of priorities.

Colchester Borough Homes has launched a "Major Works Compact" and a "Major Works Toolkit" for tenants that outline the standards of service and targets agreed for the delivery of services and improvements which will achieve Decent Homes.

Hillingdon Homes	
Value for money – Decent Homes Programme Partnering	
Background to initiative	Expressions of interest - July 2003 Formal appointment of partners - April 2004 Commence works on site - July 2004
Main aims	To bring all Hillingdon Council housing stock up to the decent homes standard by 2008
Main benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to the stock • Less maintenance (reduced revenue costs) • Improved facilities and layouts for tenants and leaseholders.
Efficiency gains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 20% savings installation of windows and doors • Up to 15% savings on installation of kitchen and bathrooms • Staff costs up to 40% • Revenue savings - maintenance budget.
Comments	<p>Collaborative Working Centre Ltd has used the approach to partnering as a case for 'good practice'.</p> <p>2004/05 decent homes programme targets achieved in terms of both completions and spend – 12 month programme delivered in 9 months and £27 million spent.</p>

A number of ALMOs make use of the decent homes funding and their procurement policy to ensure opportunities for local suppliers and the provision of training and employment opportunities for local disadvantaged groups.

Hounslow Homes has an apprenticeship scheme which includes placements for multi-trade work and has been extended to include apprentices from partner contractors. The approach has been accepted as a national demonstration project under the 'Sustainable Training for Sustainable Communities' initiative launched by Constructing Excellence in November 2003.

Sheffield Homes has established a Construction Job Match Initiative that will enable a 500 funded trainee apprenticeship programme over the next three years. The trainees will be undertaking training in trades where there is a regional skills shortage and will ensure continued capacity to deliver around £1bn of local construction work. The first 100 trainees have been recruited and placed with the Decent Homes contractors, 30% of which are from BME communities.

In addition ALMOs have taken the green agenda seriously. There are examples of:

- Innovative practice on green issues and energy conservation
- Solar panels being piloted
- Free energy efficient light bulbs distributed to tenants, reducing tenants' bills and also reducing CO2 emissions.

Leeds North East Homes is working with Groundwork Leeds using planning for real techniques on environmental improvement in one regeneration scheme.

CityWest Homes is modernising its district heating scheme in Pimlico, which supplies 3000 homes, 45 commercial premises and a school, to reduce carbon emissions and increase efficiency.

Barnet Homes uses its decent homes programme to identify residents having difficulty with their heating bills who are then referred to the Energy Efficiency Officer for further advice and assistance.

Colchester Borough Homes is converting a scheme of sheltered bedsits to self contained units with a 'hotel feel'. The scheme includes a number of environmental initiatives including UV Water Treatment System and Solar Panelling to reduce energy consumption.

Ashfield Homes	
Introduction of Environmental Management System ISO14001 (EMS) and Bird Boxes for Local Primary Schools	
Background to initiative	The purpose of the initiative is to ensure the company is aware of its impact upon the environment both locally and upon the wider community. As part of this project the off-cuts from the joiners shop are used to build bird boxes which are then distributed to local primary schools.
Main aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To minimise waste • To assess the impact on the environment • Reduce costs in the long term • To work with the local community to understand the need to protect the environment and wildlife within the locality • To educate about recycling • To increase recycling.
Main benefits	<p>Savings can be made through better use of resources, minimising waste and through reduction in use of paper as staff move to duplex printing.</p> <p>In terms of the production of bird boxes, this can help to promote the image of the company (widely publicised by the local press) but at the same time assists primary schools in their education programme.</p>
Costs	<p>£2000 set up costs with an additional £1000 per year ongoing costs.</p> <p>The costs of producing the bird boxes are minimal and equate to a few pounds to produce. For this the ALMO can protect local wildlife and also help in the education of young children with the intention of them growing up to appreciate the wildlife in their locality and to appreciate the benefits of recycling.</p>
Efficiency gains	As the benefits of the EMS are rolled out across the company there will be savings on heating, lighting and paper etc. which are likely to exceed running costs.
Comments	<p>The EMS is registered through the British Standards Institution (BSI). They assess progress every 12 months and compile an independent report.</p> <p>The work with local primary schools has been awarded a Best Practice Charter Mark.</p>

DIVERSITY

ALMOs are looking for ways to alter aspects of the service to meet the specific needs of different customers, such as black and minority ethnic communities or those excluded from normal services by their disability or poor mental health. There are a number of examples of new approaches:

- Support for minority/vulnerable tenants, eg, floating support, effective multi agency approach to aids and adaptations for disabled people
- Working through the "Independence model" to support older people so that residents are able to live at home as long as possible
- Developing an asset management strategy for redundant older persons accommodation (eg, bedsits)
- One to one consultation with vulnerable people over services changes
- Housing advice surgeries in London in three community languages
- Racial harassment reporting and action projects jointly with other landlords.

Berneslai Homes carried out an audit of needs and consultation with gypsy and traveller communities, which has resulted in a resource centre being developed through the support of a multi agency team.

Hammersmith and Fulham HMS has an equalities action team, chaired by the Chief Executive, with an external "critical friend" overseeing a positive action programme; and an externally focussed equalities champions group made up of representatives from hard to reach groups, voluntary groups, the police and others who sign off the Equalities Impact assessment of major policies every year.

CityWest Homes puts a quarterly equalities briefing on its website aimed at staff, contractors and residents. It also offers a victim support pack in 12 languages which includes a credit card sized reference card with emergency contact numbers.

Kensington and Chelsea TMO developed TMO2YOU as an outreach service, to ensure vulnerable clients have equal access to TMO services including repairs, energy and debt advice and access to participation events. The service uses the pre-existing skills of sheltered and community alarm service staff to target home visits to vulnerable clients and ensure that all engaged tenants have a needs assessment at least every 12 months. The service has recycled grant with the agreement of the Supporting People team and has had only minimal set up costs. KCTMO is working closely with a range of partners such as Age Concern and Sixty Plus to further develop services that support independent living as well as signposting to other services.

Colchester Borough Homes has joined in an Expert Patient programme where individuals living with chronic illnesses, many of whom live in sheltered housing, are enabled to cope better with their illnesses.

Leeds North West Homes has set up a number of new approaches to working with vulnerable people, improving access to their services. There is a disabled users' group which advises on service improvements. A Community Liaison post holder works specifically with older people, disabled people and minority ethnic groups. Action plans linked to regular estate managers' visits have been developed for new tenants who are vulnerable.

Derby Homes has worked together with a group of tenants and residents, and the police, to create ARC (Awareness Raising Cooperative) which aims to be a support group for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community in Derby. The group is recognised as part of the tenant consultation framework, and so gets support to hold meetings, arrange publicity and take initiatives to deal with issues of concern. Derby Homes has created a dedicated hotline for LGBT issues.

At **Wigan & Leigh Housing Company** maintenance operatives are provided with information on vulnerability of tenants such as hard of hearing or language. All contractors carry language interpretation service cards.

In **Hounslow Homes** the IT system at the call centre uses a number of icons and symbols to show whether a tenant has special needs, their vulnerability and if they need contact in another language to English. Call centre staff speak a variety of community languages and have access to the council's and Language Line translation services. The ALMO contributes to community cohesion through the support of a programme, free for tenants. Those from BME backgrounds have been successfully encouraged to take part and enrolment in Lewisham college for housing courses has attracted almost 100 per cent enrolment from BME backgrounds following a joint approach with the ALMO.

Rochdale Boroughwide Housing provides help for vulnerable people to apply for housing through the choice based lettings system. Senior advisors provide help for applicants and the community induction project and equality officers help families settle in areas they are not used to. The ALMO also works closely with the council to help women suffering domestic violence.

Solihull Community Housing (SCH)	
Warden scheme remodelling – The Safe & Sound project	
Background to initiative	<p>The council originally had a traditional residential warden service but SCH now provides a support service called Safe and Sound that allows residents to maintain their independence whilst still having the comfort of the emergency alarm.</p> <p>Supported Housing Officers (SHOs) agree a service level with the clients in terms of both telephone and personal contact. This ranges from a daily call and weekly visit through to a monthly call and quarterly visit, based entirely on the needs of the client.</p>
Main aims	<p>The aim of the service is to allow residents of Solihull to live independently in their own homes regardless of their tenure. The local authority carries out annual home safety checks for Safe & Sound users. The inspectors identify any tripping and falling hazards. A home fire risk assessment, created by West Midlands Fire Service, is also carried out. This includes a gas and electrical safety check. Any minor repairs needed are carried out during the visit, with referrals to other agencies as required.</p>
Main benefits	<p>The SHOs carry out an annual review of their clients' needs on behalf of Adult Social Services. The number of people able to live at home has increased from 49 per 1000 in 2002 to 82 per 1000 in 2004 as a direct result of Safe and Sound. This helped Social Services move from a one star to a two star organisation in 2003.</p>
Costs	<p>The Safe & Sound scheme works in partnership with the council. Adult Social Services fund the capital outlay for any additional alarms and also where assistive technology is required. A show flat enables clients, professionals and family to see the telecare available.</p>
Efficiency gains	<p>SCH now employs 23 rather than 30 SHOs and has also increased the number of clients receiving the service.</p> <p>In addition more people are able to remain in their home living independently that would otherwise need to go into expensive residential care.</p>
Comments	<p>Also as part of the CPA inspection of Solihull MBC in July 2004, Safe and Sound was praised by the Audit Commission as an example of partnership work.</p>

PROCUREMENT and PARTNERING

Of course all ALMOs prioritise the thinking they put into the best way to procure both their long term investment programmes but also their routine repairs programmes. Value for Money and efficiency savings are further forward in government thinking than they were when the ALMO sector was first set up. But many ALMOs are already ahead of the game in their approach. The inspection reports published to date show examples of:

- ALMOs knowing the costs of providing elements of service and having plans to review/reduce costs
- Procurement savings in asset management and repairs
- Procurement savings in central overheads
- SLAs/management agreements tightly controlled/regularly reviewed
- Pilots evaluated before they are rolled out
- Savings year on year
- Evidence of long term improvement in quality
- Formal partnering arrangements, eg, for repairs, carefully monitored
- Relationships with other stakeholders, eg, social services, voluntary sector, police working well especially for tenancy support, and for quality of life on estates.

Sheffield Homes has achieved value for money through its long term contracting arrangements which have also enabled it to:

- Secure supply chain arrangements to achieve the highest specification of works for the lowest possible price
- Set up cluster groups to allow supply chain expertise to help deliver the project
- Set up a new web based EPM/IT collaborative software operational system - shared with its Decent Homes Partners
- Achieve Charter Mark status for the way it manages and operates construction programmes and maintains industry standards
- Continually improve and maintain high standards of materials and workmanship, complying with Egan principles
- Provide a better, more customer focussed, investment service
- Reduce inefficiencies, share sub contractors and pass best practice from one contractor to another
- Build capacity in the market and secure labour resources to deliver £3.5bn of investment within the region over the next few years
- Allow private owners to buy into schemes, supporting the elderly and more vulnerable members of the community and working closely with social services to provide essential disabled adaptations to support independent living and special measures for BME communities
- Establish local area boards and project groups to inform decisions on quality and service, choice of materials, re-modelling of poor

internal layouts, achieving lifetime home standards through better design and removing future hazards and designing projects around these issues.

Colchester Borough Homes (CBH)	
Partnership with Inspace	
Background to initiative	The three way partnership of Inspace, CBH and Colchester Borough Council delivers an innovative repairs and property maintenance service. This is an "insourced", 10 year partnership, with Inspace using the existing CBH operatives to manage the reactive and planned maintenance of the properties.
Main aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet Best Value criteria • Meet government strategy for innovation in procurement • Achieve greater predictability at the front line • Integration with the local supply chain • Provide a framework for training for the local community (100% of repair work is done by local contractors and 70% of project works).
Main benefits	<p>The contract is performance linked and fixed to council budgets.</p> <p>New working methods are delivering real results. A new IT management system with hand-held units replaced paper job tickets. Repair jobs are sent via SMS text message to operatives in the field, which enables better monitoring of progress and reallocation of any spare capacity.</p> <p>Inspace's general manager is on CBH's management team. Officer facilities are shared to improve team working and there is a new joint livery for signage, clothing and vehicles.</p> <p>Agreed profits are paid to Inspace, but equally overspends are a cost to them: a true risk and reward partnership based on open book principles.</p>
Costs	The value of the initial 10 year contract is £110 million.
Efficiency gains	<p>The audit commission housing inspectors commented favourably on the increased value for money. Savings are fed back into improving services for tenants</p> <p>Customer satisfaction has moved from 89% in 2003 to 100% in 2004. In the same one year period, repairs completed in local target times have risen from 83% to 94% and the percentage of appointments kept from 55% to 78%.</p>

A1 Housing Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood Homes	
Procurement Partnership	
Background to initiative	Bassetlaw District Council and Newark and Sherwood District Council both established ALMOs in 2004 under Round four of the ALMO Programme. As neighbouring authorities and ALMOs it was clear that partnership working would benefit local residents and both organisations. It was agreed to combine in a procurement exercise seeking partners to deliver the Decent Homes Programmes in both areas.
Main aims	The tender exercise was set up to seek two contractors that would work for both organisations on separate contracts. By increasing the potential joint contract value to approximately £160 million the opportunity to obtain value for money and greater economies of scale was enhanced.
Main benefits	<p>The tender followed the European Tender process. Over 20 expressions of interest were received. The shortlist selection panel consisted of officers and Board Members from both organisations, and seven companies were selected to bid for the work. All contractors had an opportunity to make a presentation to the full Boards and Management Teams of both ALMOs as part of the exercise.</p> <p>The selection process was very vigorous and the selection panel visited various sites around the country to see how the contractors performed on site. The final evaluations were considered by the panels and a recommendation on the preferred partners was presented to each Board. The decision to appoint was made independently.</p>
Efficiency gains	The exercise allowed both organisations to save money on the cost of procuring the partners and to use the in-house skills of each organisation's officers. The contractors have benefited through savings in the cost of tendering, reduction in the cost of overheads in setting up and managing the work programmes and by being guaranteed a contract in excess of £160 million.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The majority of ALMOs which offered ideas and case study material for this report chose examples of positive practice which stretch well beyond the routines of housing management and maintenance. All of the contributors are involved in projects which will improve the life chances of some of their residents. In some cases they have used their local strategic connections to access grants and contribute resources to start projects off. Usually they work with schools or colleges or other skilled and specialist organisations. Increasingly it is residents who initiate these activities as their confidence in the ALMO's ability to deliver results grows. Activities range from short term holiday projects - fun days and football clubs for children on estates- through to much longer term schemes such as apprenticeships leading to qualifications for those who take part. These projects are not usually looked at in detail at inspection time except as part of the broader resident involvement canvas, or as part of an anti-social behaviour prevention programme. However, specific activities are mentioned including:

- Local labour and training
- Out of school clubs
- Mother and toddler schemes
- Activities for older people
- Anti fuel poverty initiatives
- Savings schemes.

Bolton at Home is engaged in large scale regeneration work. In conjunction with other partners, it has established three Urban Care Centres in the private sector with two public sector Urban Care for Neighbourhoods in development. Their role is to support communities and neighbourhoods to be sustainable by assisting customer empowerment, finding solutions and influencing service delivery . The private sector renewal service has established a Private Sector Customer Panel which has three main functions: to provide a customer perspective regarding new initiatives and products; to provide a vehicle for sharing information and good practice; and to monitor service delivery.

In **Leeds North East Homes** the Cranmer Bank Regeneration Scheme is designed to regenerate the shopping area of the Cranmer Bank Estate. The shops are at the heart of the estate and are currently a focus for acts of anti social behaviour. Leeds North East Homes has employed an environmental charity (Groundwork Leeds) to partner on environmental improvements and regeneration schemes. There has been extensive customer consultation to establish customers' requirements for the area and how these should be reflected in the draft designs. The scheme will combine environmental improvements for the shopping area with renovations to the structure of the building including new roof, parapet walls and walkways and improvements to the shops and the homes above. It will also include artwork designed by local people including local school children.

New Prospect: Salford	
Citizenship-working with schools	
Background to initiative	<p>Citizenship classes are provided for year 11 pupils on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-social behaviour • Supported housing • Tenant participation.
Main aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate young people on housing management • Advise on career options in housing • Provide information on how they can make positive contributions to sustainable communities agenda • Change perceptions both of young people but also of older generations by encouraging engagement with residents associations • Reduce anti-social behaviour incidences • Advise young people on a range of housing options • Enhancing knowledge of rights of young people in respect of tenant participation, access to social housing and what to do if they are a victim of anti-social behaviour or bullying.
Main benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnering with education authority, different approach to teaching since teaching is by hands-on practitioners who are doing the job • Change in perceptions of a core group of young people including perceptions of them • Increased understanding of impact of anti-social behaviour on communities • Free career advice and awareness of housing services • Beneficiaries include young people, the school and communities where they live.
Costs	<p>Minimal set up costs other than staff time since project delivered using internal existing resources</p> <p>Some minor costs when pupils were taken off site such as transport hire.</p>
Efficiency gains	<p>Potential reduced costs of tackling anti-social behaviour via the traditional expensive enforcement route</p> <p>Lower levels of homelessness assessments, tenancy support and void turnover.</p>
Comments	<p>External evaluation carried out by the Head of Citizenship at Walkden High School, and programme tailored accordingly.</p> <p>Consideration being given to expansion of programme to include other age groups and needs of asylum seekers and refugees.</p>

High Peak Community Housing Ltd (HPCH)	
Building skills workshops for schools	
Background to initiative	Nationwide skills shortages and lack of new apprentices coming into building industry prompted the government initiative to promote construction industry to school leavers. ALMO approached by Derbyshire Education Business Partnership and Chamber Training to design and deliver a range of workshops for schools. Commenced three years ago on small scale: now have 4-5 trades together and visit 6-8 schools per year.
Main aims	To give youngsters an insight and hands on experience into building construction skills and possible career opportunities available to them. Allows ALMO to become involved with local young community.
Main benefits	Enjoyable experience with possibility of work placements and future employment with HPCH. Allows school leavers the chance to try out different trades before enrolling on any college courses. Helps the local community and is good for public relations.
Costs	Minimum set up costs but full day for four to five tradesmen to deliver workshop skills to youngsters so loss of income for this time would be around £1100. Nominal fee of £200 charged to recover some of the costs.
Efficiency gains	The main gain for HPCH is that modern apprenticeship places available at HPCH will hopefully be filled by youngsters who have attended a workshop, or have had further work based training with the ALMO who gets a better feel as to how well they perform and helps ensure the right people are found for the right job.
Comments	HPCH has just been awarded a certificate by Derbyshire Education Business Partnership in recognition for its involvement in education business link activities. DEBP, Chamber Training and E2E all feedback positively and the schools think it is great opportunity for the youngsters.

WILL ALMOs GO ON DOING BETTER?

This is the final question. Service improvement is built into the nature of the ALMO structure. The ALMOs who responded to requests for examples of good practice were relatively modest about the internal thinking and behaviours which turn organisations' performance round. But it is absolutely clear that the best ALMOs have delivered real and tangible improvements in a short time and that residents have noticed. The numerous ingredients to success which come out from inspection reports time and again are:

- Strong leadership from board and executive, especially on the "overarching themes"- access and customer focus, diversity and value for money
- Clarity about longer term business objectives and demonstrating strategic capability and willingness to take hard decisions
- Residents as capable as other board members
- Resident engagement in improving service quality much wider than just residents on area panels and board
- Board reflects diversity of community
- Development plans and assessments in place for board members, over medium and longer term
- Strong track record of achievement against plans over recent years and against any inspectorate recommendations
- Discernible improvement in services which have been noticed by residents
- Strong awareness of changing national and regional legislative and policy frameworks
- Plans are prioritised, SMART and resourced
- Plans are ambitious (organisation benchmarks against top quartile nationally as well as local cluster)
- Rigorous performance management frameworks in place, appraisal system universally applied
- Accreditation systems in place where relevant and meaningful
- Performance Indicators collected and used not just for headline matters but for informing local priorities too
- Best value principles used to drive reviews which are designed to produce better services for residents
- Evidence of real learning from other providers (not just own sector)
- Enough capacity (staff/board/resources/offices/IT) in place to deliver plans
- Resources aligned with priorities
- Aware of weaknesses including inconsistencies in service delivery between areas/departments and plans in place to tackle this
- Clear understanding about costs of providing different elements of the service and plans in place to review services which may no longer represent VFM
- PIs in place to demonstrate VFM
- SLAs are well drafted with firm monitoring and appropriate Performance Indicators.

CONCLUSION

All the evidence so far is that ALMOs are a success story, to be celebrated. Boards are becoming more mature in their long term strategic thinking. They are already planning for life beyond Decent Homes delivery. The most successful ALMOs are those who have made the transition to "arm's length" but are working well at the strategic level with their sponsoring council. Together they form a powerful force for good for people in housing need and for the quality of life of everyone who lives in their neighbourhoods.

Debby Ounsted
June 2005

ALMOs by round

No. of units are based on original bids and may have subsequently changed

Round 1 (8 ALMOs)	Units
Ashfield Homes	8,288
CityWest Homes (Westminster)	14,000
Derby Homes	15,424
Hounslow Homes	14,801
Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing	28,269
Rochdale Boroughwide Housing	16,831
Tristar Homes (Stockton on Tees)	14,060
Wigan & Leigh Housing Company	26,446
Round 1 total	138,119
Round 2 (16 ALMOs)	
Barneslai Homes (Barnsley MBC)	23,648
Blyth Valley Housing	7,756
Bolton at Home	21,500
Brent Housing Partnership	8,528
Carrick Housing	3,872
Cheltenham Homes	5,027
Colchester Borough Homes	7,060
First Choice Homes Oldham	18,550
Hillingdon Homes	13,904
Kensington & Chelsea TMO	7,100
Leeds East Homes	12,661
Leeds North East Homes	6,851
Leeds North West Homes	12,178
Leeds South East Homes	8,727
Leeds South Homes	16,265
Leeds West Homes	13,206
Round 2 total	186,833
Round 3 (11 ALMOs)	
Barnet Homes	11,452
East Durham Homes (Easington)	11,212
Gateshead Housing Company	24,663
Golden Gates Housing (Warrington)	9,935
High Peak Community Housing	4,389
Homes for Islington	30,231
Newcastle Homes	32,092
Poole Housing Partnership	4,726
Sheffield Homes (partial)	11,074
Solihull Community Housing	11,541
South Lakes Housing (South Lakeland)	3,421
Round 3 total	154,736
Round 1-3 total	479,688

Round 4 (12 new ALMOs + 2 existing ALMOs)	
A1 Housing Bassetlaw	7,925
Brent Housing Partnership (partial)	775
Ealing Homes	14,679
Eastbourne Homes	3,835
Hammersmith & Fulham HMS	13,778
Northwards Housing (Manchester) (partial) (from Dec 05 subject to tenants vote in Sept)	13,839
Newark & Sherwood Homes	5,864
Nottingham City Homes	33,434
2010 Rotherham	25,128
Sandwell Homes	35,079
Sheffield Homes (partial)	22,165
Six Town Housing (Bury)	8,936
People 1 st (Slough) (from Dec 05)	6,974
Wolverhampton Homes (from Oct 05)	26,770
Round total	219,181
Round 1-4 total	698,869
Ascham Homes (LB Waltham Forest)*	11,409
New Prospect Housing (Salford)#	29,900
Full total 49 ALMOs	740,178
Round 5 (9 new ALMOs + 2 existing ALMOs)	
Ascham Homes (LB Waltham Forest)	11,409
Doncaster	23,730
Gloucester	4,739
Hackney (partial)	22,753
Lambeth (partial)	3,189
Newham Homes	17,814
Sheffield (partial)	17,903
Southend	6,258
South Tyneside	19,564
Stockport	11,806
Wear Valley	5,169
Round total	144,334
Round 1-5 total	843,203
New Prospect Housing (Salford)#	29,900
Full total 58 ALMO/potential shadow ALMOs	873,103

* established ALMO originally in round 2, now in round 5

established ALMO originally in round 2

ALMOs Inspection Scores

8x3* ALMOs 25x2* 3x1* ALMOs as at May 2005

ALMO	Round	Score	Date
Brent Housing Partnership	2+4	3* excellent	May 03
CityWest Homes	1	3* excellent	Oct 02
Derby Homes	1	3* excellent	Sep 02
Hounslow Homes re-inspection	1	3* excellent	Feb 05
Ashfield Homes	1	3* promising	Sep 02
Poole Housing Partnership	3	3* promising	Oct 04
Sheffield Homes	3+4+5	3* promising (R3 & 4)	Oct 04
Carrick Housing	2	3* uncertain	Dec 03
Barnet Homes	3	2* excellent	Oct 04
Bolton at Home	2	2* excellent	June 03
Hammersmith & Fulham HMS	4	2* excellent	Nov 04
High Peak Community Housing	3	2* excellent	Jan 05
Homes for Islington	3	2* excellent	Nov 04
Kensington & Chelsea TMO	2	2* excellent	May 03
Berneslai Homes	2	2* promising	Oct 03
Cheltenham Borough Homes	2	2* promising	Nov 03
Colchester Borough Homes	2	2* promising	Feb 04
Golden Gates Housing (Warrington)	3	2* promising	Sep 04
Hillingdon Homes	2	2* promising	Nov 03
Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing	1	2* promising	Sep 02
Leeds East Homes	2	2* promising	July 04
Leeds South East Homes	2	2* promising	July 04
Leeds South Homes	2	2* promising	Aug 04
Leeds North East Homes	2	2* promising	Sep 03
Leeds North West Homes	2	2* promising	June 04
Leeds West Homes	2	2* promising	Sep 03
Rochdale Boroughwide Housing re-inspection	1	2* promising	Feb 05
Solihull Community Housing	3	2* promising	Nov 04
South Lakes Housing	3	2* promising	Jan 05
Your Homes Newcastle	3	2* promising	Nov 04
Blyth Valley Housing	2	2* uncertain	May 03
First Choice Homes Oldham	2	2* uncertain	Apr 03
Wigan & Leigh Housing Company re-inspection	1	2* uncertain	Feb 05
East Durham Homes (Easington)	3	1* uncertain	Jan 05
Gateshead Housing Company	3	1* promising	Aug 04
Tristar Homes re-inspection	1	1* poor	Feb 05